Part IV

Revisiting the Political Economy of the AU-NEPAD
Chapter 7

Conclusion

Introduction

The aim of this study was to provide a perspective on how transnational capital and allied social forces are shaping contemporary Africa. The entry point of this study was Africa’s macro-restructuring through AU-NEPAD, which was grounded in a historical perspective of how Africa’s macro-restructuring has been unfolding since the LPA agenda of the early 1980s. It has magnified the dynamics of the conjuncture of macro-restructuring commencing in 1989 with the defeat of the ECA by the World Bank. The study showed how a self-reliance and self-sustenance perspective was replaced by a new Afro-neoliberal consensus. This consensus was based on the search for new concepts that could inform Africa’s macro-restructuring: notions of ‘partnership’, new concepts of collective security, commitments to liberal democracy and a rethink on the role of the market. By the latter part of the 1990s, this consensus expressed itself through a political commitment by Africa’s leaders to establish the African Union and to champion a common continental economic policy through NEPAD. The historicised origins of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring assist with thinking about Africa as not merely ‘globalised from the outside’ or simply driven by ‘big men’ buttressed by ‘powerful states’. Moreover, Africa’s macro-restructuring was not a function of foreign policy based on ‘national interest’. Africa’s macro-restructuring has been driven by a class project led by a transnational fraction of the African ruling classes.

Through studying the role and agency of this class fraction this study highlighted the remaking of Africa at two levels. First, at the level of the relationship between national passive revolutions and the continental passive revolution. It showed how Afro-neoliberalism expressed through particular national strategies took on a continental articulation, but through distinctive strategic thrusts and class practices.
This was buttressed and supported by the transnational fraction of the African ruling classes and a new continental power structure: an Afro-neoliberal historic bloc. This bloc has provided the link between the national and the continental. It has its roots in national accumulation processes that are increasingly globalising. The organising and reshaping of contemporary Africa happens through the social agency of this bloc. This is different from the compradorisation of national bourgeois forces in post-colonial African countries.

The second level at which Africa has been remaking itself is at the intersection with external forces. Through AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring this has happened through a new global and class consensus about how Africa should be globalised and adjusted according to the requirements of transnational capital. This new consensus has been formed through various institutions that make up the global development decision-making system and the US-led transnational historic bloc. Engagements with and responses from the UN, the World Bank and IMF, the G7/8 and the WEF regarding AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring have been crucial. The consent and consensus achieved in this process for AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has also impacted on class formation at a political-ideological level. Thus, Africa’s Afro-neoliberal vision and approach to macro-restructuring is actually globalised. It is co-owned by the US-led transnational historical bloc and the Afro-neoliberal historic bloc. This common solution also provides the necessary condition to bring in the Afro-neoliberal bloc into the US-led transnational historical bloc. Contemporary Africa is being made at both these levels. The ideas, institutions and capacities coalescing at these levels have been crucial in remaking the African order. Africa today is being made by a new project supported by social forces on the continent and external to it. How these forces have done this is central to this study. This is pursued further below including bringing into view the limits of this project.

**Afro-neoliberalism and the New Scramble for Africa**

Africa’s macro-restructuring through the AU-NEPAD is not about finding its own way to utilise its resources and external relationships to bring about development in keeping with the needs of its people. It is not about autonomous, participatory and ecologically driven development. This is reflected in three crucial findings. First, the
dominant ideology shaping contemporary Africa and framing its development choices is transnational neoliberalism. This is the ideology of transnational capital. Transnational neoliberalism has evolved various concepts, policies and strategies to ensure the global economy is restructured around its interests. It cannot merely be reduced to the infamous ‘Washington consensus’. In the African context transnational neoliberalism has taken on African characteristics in national spaces and on the continent, each level having its own mechanisms of control. This ideology has been internalised and rationalised as the basis for AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring and ultimately Africa’s adjustment to transnational capital on a continental scale.

Second, Afro-neoliberalism has emerged as a non-hegemonic ideology. Its construction has happened through jettisoning Africa’s older and more radical historical ideologies. African socialism, scientific socialism and self reliant Pan-Africanism have been replaced by a new and dominant paradigm of Afro-neoliberalism. The vision of this concept of control is about a globalised Africa in which market-led development forms the basis for Afro-neoliberal capitalism. It envisages an Africa populated by ‘good governed’ states, with truncated democracies, limited poverty reduction agendas (as defined by the MDGs) and disciplined citizens. Its primary objective is to integrate Africa into the global economy on the terms of transnational capital; it engenders externally oriented and an export-led accumulation model. This is not an alternative to transnational neoliberalism but an Africanised version of it. The contradiction of what prevails is best reflected in the ambition of AU-NEPAD to achieve ‘self reliance’ but through globalising Africa through Afro-neoliberalism.

Third, Afro-neoliberalism is not a fixed or frozen ideological construct. As the political project of the transnational fraction of the African ruling classes, it has mutated in conjunction with transnational neoliberalism. Within the US-led transnational historical bloc and its global development system, transnational neoliberalism has taken on particular emphases. In some quarters it has been explicitly articulated as ‘free market’ neoliberalism such as the ICC. In the US it is a securitised neoliberalism and in the IMF and World Bank it is institutional neoliberalism. Transnational neoliberalism is articulated in different ways and with different emphases from within the US-led transnational historical bloc to advance the
interests and objectives of transnational capital. As the AU-NEPAD has been engaged by the UN, the World Bank and IMF, the G7/8 and the WEF it has revealed the depth of consensus between the Afro-neoliberal historical bloc and the US-led transnational historical bloc. In this study such an approach to AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has taken us beyond an interpretation of the AU-NEPAD merely as a partnership and a trade-off between Africa and the Northern-centric power structure.

A New Global Consensus for Adjusting Africa to Transnational Capital

The intersection of the AU-NEPAD and the US-led transnational historical bloc has engendered a new consensus about Africa’s adjustment to transnational capital. This is not about Africa being given the space to define its policy options and realise its own objectives. It is not about a counter-hegemonic alternative. The existence of this new global consensus brings to the fore the following conclusions. First, AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring was articulated as a variant of transnational neoliberalism which affirmed key concepts, policies and strategies consistent with the imperatives of the US-led transnational historical bloc but with an African voice. Instead of a trade-off, Africa’s Afro-neoliberal historical bloc has given the US-led historical bloc what it wanted. This was the basis for engagement. This is reflected substantively in the AU-NEPAD principles, concepts and strategies. It is also reflected in the responses of the US-led transnational historical bloc. The MDG approach to poverty reduction, ‘good governance’, liberal democracy, multi-lateral conflict resolution, private sector led development and competitiveness are central elements of convergence. Thus, the hegemonic practices that came to the fore were not based on a clash or a confrontation with Africa. Instead it was about incorporating, strengthening and giving further momentum to an Africa ‘owned’ and ‘initiated’ project by the transnational fraction of Africa’s ruling class.

The UN, the World Bank/ IMF and the WEF played crucial roles in shaping Afro-neoliberalism. This did not necessarily happen through determining every detail of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring but through ideological engagements directly with the continent in national and continental interactions over the past few decades. The UN more than the other institutions had a direct input in shaping AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring through its long historical role and involvement in Africa’s development...
through the ECA. The World Bank and IMF impacted on donor relationships with Africa through stabilisation and structural adjustment programs. The WEF influenced Africa through its regional Africa Forum convened since 1990. All these institutions contributed in different ways to embedding transnational neoliberalism on the African continent and shaping the Afro-neoliberal consensus. Moreover, the UN, the World Bank and IMF, the G7/8 and the WEF played crucial roles in globalising support and a common consensus for AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring within global development policy processes. The scale of support and importance given to AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has been unprecedented such that Africa was no longer viewed through the lens of Afro-pessimism, but instead Africa was being regarded as a front-runner poised to be a successful neoliberaliser after almost three decades.

The second important conclusion that emerges from the intersection of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring and the US-led transnational historical bloc relates to working together to globalise Africa. The Afro-neoliberal bloc wanted the US-led historical bloc to develop Africa on the terms of transnational capital. The assumptions about financial flows (ODA, FDI, debt relief and trade) and the importance this has for Africa’s development was seen as absolutely necessary to develop Africa. Hence Afro-neoliberalism developed the necessary discourses, concepts and policies to achieve this. Afro-neoliberalism worked to achieve what the US-led transnational historical bloc wanted and in this process AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring is not about partnership but about an extension of the domination of the US-led transnational historical bloc. AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring is a project to ensure a disciplined Africa surrenders to a Northern-centric power structure in the hope that adjustment to transnational capital will bring change to Africa. The expectation is that Africa will be a successful globaliser in the 21st century, primarily if it intensifies and creates the conditions for financial flows into the continent.

The third important conclusion that emerges from the intersection of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring and the US-led transnational historical bloc is that the new global consensus on Africa’s development choices reflects a geo-political relationship such that Africa is being integrated into global capitalism through a social hierarchy. This process entails articulating the ideological-political outlook of the transnational fraction of the African ruling classes and the Afro-neoliberal historical bloc so that it
leads with the US-led historical bloc. This means Afro-neoliberalism as a concept of control for Africa evolves through the responses received from the US-led transnational historical bloc. This determines politico-ideological class formation within the Afro-neoliberal historical bloc and sets parameters for how it leads the process of macro-restructuring on the African continent. As a consequence, the long-term interests of the Afro-neoliberal historical bloc becomes synonymous with the US-led transnational historical bloc. Thus Africa’s integration into the global political economy is through the social agency of its Afro-neoliberal historical bloc primarily. It leads and guides Africa’s macro-restructuring while creating the conditions for transnational capital, acting through the US-led transnational historical bloc, to also shape Africa. AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring creates the conditions to bring in transnational capital. The businesses, industries and sectors controlled by these social forces stand to benefit from this form of integration. This, of course, excludes the rest of Africa.

**Disciplining Africa through the New Global Consensus**

A partnership reading of NEPAD tends to focus on the thirteen responsibilities and obligations defined for the US-led transnational historical bloc in the context of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring to assess success or failure of the ostensible partnership. It assumes a symmetric relationship based on good will and reciprocity. However, the perspective of this study views AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring as a class project that reproduces the domination of the US-led transnational historical bloc and the non-hegemonic rule of transnational capital through neoliberalisation. It shows how consent and consensus for Afro-neoliberal macro-restructuring through the AU-NEPAD has been constituted. Consistent with reproducing conditions for the domination of the continent, consent obtained from the US-led transnational historical bloc specifies three essential conditions for ongoing support for AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring.

First, an acceptable Africa, that has an audience at the table of G7/8 countries and the WEF, for instance, has to be a neoliberal Africa; Afro-neoliberal is just as good. This is an Africa that accepts the rules of global capitalism defined through the hegemonic ideology of transnational neoliberalism. An Africa that attempts neo-mercantilist or
other forms of regulation of the global political economy is a ‘failed Africa’ and is afflicted with various pathologies that are unacceptable to transnational capital. Second, an Africa that is illiberal and is ‘badly governed’ will not receive the benefits of the commitments made by the US-led transnational historical bloc and promised in the context of supporting AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. However, this does not preclude bi-lateral and other relations between the US-led transnational historic bloc and illiberal Africa. Oil deals and mineral rights are somehow impervious to and outside of this consensus. Third, a liberal Africa and its ‘good governed’ states will be the beneficiaries of support. This includes debt relief, ODA, support for the MDGs and trade, for example. This is not a bargaining process neither is it a partnership therefore the exact degree of support is determined by the US-led historical bloc. Through its dominance it decides what is given to Africa and the Afro-neoliberal bloc works with these concessions.

This global consensus at the intersection of the US-led bloc and the Afro-neoliberal bloc defines what a disciplined Africa means. Essentially it is an Africa grounded in an Afro-neoliberal model of capitalism that is about: ‘African owned policies’; ‘African governance’; being market led, externally orientated and dependent; reducing poverty based on the MDGs and in accordance with overall debt management strategies and truncated representative democracies. An Africa adjusted to transnational capital means it advances the interests of transnational capital and of Africa’s transnational fraction, at the expense of Africa’s people. Small concessions are made to Africa’s people to blunt some of the impact of adjusting Africa to transnational capital. In short, these are Africa’s ‘choices’, in the context of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. It provides the basis for how Africa adjusts to transnational capital and confronts its internal organic crises. The AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring project is not about the success or failure of partnership. It is about defining these choices and setting a direction for Africa’s accumulation path in the global conjuncture of neoliberal restructuring. Such a path is not about transformation guided by the needs of Africa’s people but by adjustment to the interests of transnational capital.
Africa’s Passive Revolution

While the articulation between the Afro-neoliberal historical bloc and the US-led transnational historical bloc defines Africa as a dominated continent within the global capitalist order, internally, within Africa, neoliberalisation works through a politics of passive revolution. A passive revolution is not coercive like a counter-revolution, but does entail a particular expression of non-hegemonic rule. It is a form of domination and class rule which creates the conditions for the restoration of capitalist relations of production while attempting to meet some demands of the masses. The rhetoric of passive revolution speaks to the aspirations of the people but redirects change such that the rule and power of capital prevails. In the context of global capitalism it amounts to engendering the rule of transnational capital over society and the state. The fostering of neoliberalisation through situated class practices and the internalisation of transnational neoliberal ideology is central to this process.

Africa’s neoliberalisation and its national passive revolutions have roots in two conjunctures: (i) the conjuncture of the defeat of radical and potentially radical state-led development projects; (ii) the conjuncture of debt and adjustment. Neoliberalisation happened in national spaces due to the shifting relations of force in these conjunctures. Africa was disciplined through violent counter-revolution and through Afro-neoliberal adjustment. There were various pathways to neoliberalisation out of these conjunctures. African socialist states, scientific socialist states, military dictatorships, for instance, all had to ensure internal political economies were adjusted to meet the requirements of transnational capital. By the 1990s, post the Cold War, Africa was firmly on an Afro-neoliberal trajectory. National passive revolutions internalised transnational neoliberalism, but through African concepts, alongside a wave of democratisation in the 1990s. Having locked Africa into a globalising capitalist path of development, the next round of structural adjustment conditionality brought to the fore a ‘good governance agenda’ and a new politics of poverty reduction. As Africa’s national circuits of accumulation were being externalised through liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation, mass aspirations were being managed from above through poverty reduction discourses. Poverty reduction through HIPC and the MDGs entrench Africa’s neoliberalisation and redefine state forms and
state-civil society relations. In the main, Africa’s national passive revolutions have been the main response from above by ruling elites to democratisation and this has limited the choices for Africa’s people. A new liberal constitutionalism has come to the fore which locks in the power of capital over society.

To further entrench and consolidate Africa’s national passive revolutions, a third round of macro-regionalisation was launched through the AU-NEPAD. This buttressed the conjuncture of macro-restructuring, inaugurated since 1989. Through the decade of the 1990s Africa’s transnationalising elites developed a consensus for a new macro-restructuring project that would redefine Africa’s relations with the Northern-centric power structure. Africa was abandoning a politics of confrontation inspired by the NIEO and was searching for a ‘partnership’. Moreover, this was one element of a wider approach and solution to Africa’s organic crisis of failed development. As the 1990s evolved, new security paradigms were discussed on the continent, given the new resource wars that came to the fore. Liberal democracy and constitutionalism came to be accepted as the framework for African politics. Non-intervention and non-interference based on the principle of respect for sovereignty was also qualified.

By the late 1990s the renewal of regionalisation was accepted as the means to also globalise Africa. Bringing in transnational capital through FDI and alongside trade, ODA and debt relief was accepted as the way forward for Africa. The Afro-neoliberal consensus evolved into serious conceptual approaches, institutional proposals and policy frameworks. This led to the formation of the African Union and the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development. Historicising the origins of the Afro-neoliberal consensus assists with dispelling representations of the AU-NEPAD as merely an agenda of ‘big men’ or powerful states on the continent. AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring was driven as a class project of the transnational fraction of the African ruling classes. Such a class fraction developed a social agency in the context of almost three decades of neoliberalisation of the African continent and in the context of linking national circuits of accumulation with global circuits, restructuring state-capital relations and through continental expansion. Such a class fraction has expressed its interests through states, politicians, state officials and technical cadre on the continent such that it has succeeded in utilising Afro-neoliberalism as the basis to
organise a new Afro-neoliberal historical bloc to lead Africa’s adjustment to transnational capital. The social forces involved in this bloc have also been constituted in the context of the implementation of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. Various social forces such as intellectuals, think-tanks, media agencies, financial journalists, liberal social movements, amongst others, have all rallied to the Afro-neoliberal vision and project for Africa.

The class practices that have composed the Afro-neoliberal historical bloc are central to also understanding how Africa’s continental passive revolution has been brought about. These class practices are situated within the conjuncture of macro-restructuring and are an expression of the Afro-neoliberal strategic project. In this respect this study departs from understanding regionalisation as state centric. Africa’s relations with the new global economy are mediated by conscious class action. The social and strategic agency of Africa’s transnational fraction and the Afro-neoliberal historical bloc pivot around five areas: (i) the discourse of the African Renaissance and Afro-neoliberal capitalism; (ii) continental partnership; (iii) the discourse on peace, security and stability; (iv) excluding and co-opting African civil society; and (v) external partnership. In each of these strategic areas the study takes us inside the AU-NEPAD to understand how power relations work and how macro-restructuring is organised around the interests of transnational capital and the Afro-neoliberal historical bloc.

From this analysis the following conclusions are reached. First, Africa’s national passive revolutions are linked to AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. In fact AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring re-enforces Africa’s national passive revolutions through its various class practices and vice versa. A disciplined Afro-neoliberal Africa is now led by a common reformist politics, which integrates Africa into global capitalism but also reproduces the rule of transnational capital on the continent, in sub-regions and in national spaces. At the same time, the existential critique of progressive civil society has exposed the pretence of AU-NEPAD being a project of the African people. AU-NEPAD’s rhetoric of ‘African ownership’, ‘an African solution to an African problem’, its ‘invite to mobilisation’ and its moral claims of ‘new leadership’ have not been accepted by African civil society. This critique of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has also been globalised through the World Social Forum process. However, despite these challenges to the ‘counter-hegemonic’ pretences of AU-
NEPAD, AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has contested African civil society from above. It has not only done this through advancing the new politics of poverty on the continent but has also utilised civil society participation in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process, in interactions with the Pan African Parliament (PAP) and through the gender and women’s question to promote the formation of a liberal African civil society as a bulwark to illiberal and anti-capitalist African civil society. In this sense AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has been recomposing state-civil society relations and AU-civil society relations to ensure cooption, division and exclusion across African civil society.

The second conclusion derived from the analysis of AU-NEPAD class practices points to distinctive practices of neoliberalisation at the continental level. This is different from conditionality based neoliberalisation in most national spaces on the African continent. It is also distinct from an abstract and generic model of neoliberalism. Instead at a continental level the various strategic elements of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring attempt to organise the African order by redefining and appropriating pan-Africanism as a legitimating discourse; internationalising the African state; restructuring sub-regional institutions; restructuring Africa’s security architecture; constituting a liberal civil society as a buffer against illiberal and anti-capitalist civil society and resituating Africa in relation to the Northern-centric power structure in the context of global capitalism. In short, Afro-neoliberalism has a specificity in the context of Africa’s macro-restructuring. While this is important, it has to be recognised that AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring reinforces national passive revolutions and reproduces Africa’s domination in relation to the US-led transnational historical bloc. AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring is a distinct means to adjust Africa at a continental level to transnational capital. This is different from national adjustment but reinforces it.

A third conclusion we can derive from the strategic agency of the Afro-neoliberal historical bloc and its class practices relates to the bifurcation of Africa. Through AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring, mainstream Africa is constituted as a liberal Africa versus an illiberal Africa. The coercive capacities of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring are targeted at taming illiberal Africa and assimilating illiberal Africa into the continental passive revolution. Africa’s flashpoints and conflict zones are engaged
from the standpoint of constituting an Afro-neoliberal peace. The reconstruction framework and its strategies for post-conflict situations are a product of Afro-neoliberalism. At the same time, Africa’s ‘fragile states’ and ‘weak states’ are a central target for securitised ODA. These are aid flows attempting to pre-empt the rise of terrorism. G8 support, including British support for AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring, stand out as crucial examples of how securitised ODA is targeted at illiberal Africa. Moreover, Africa’s ‘weak’ liberal states that fit into AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring have been singled out as the main beneficiaries of ODA flows. These practices reinforce the bifurcation of Africa and incentivise involvement in the APRM for example.

The New Scramble for Africa and the Limits of Afro-neoliberal Macro-restructuring

In 1980 Bill Warren’s unfinished manuscript entitled *Imperialism Pioneer of Capitalism* was published and it put forward a classical Marxist argument in favour of capitalist expansion in the peripheries of capitalism. In his view the evidence of post-World War II modernising capitalism seems to suggest that the material effects of imperialism have been beneficial and dependency theory critiques were merely part of ‘nationalist mythology’. In the current conjuncture Warren’s thesis can be read as providing a defense for Afro-neoliberalism and the need to globalise capitalism on the continent even if it means subordination to the rule of transnational capital. However, in this study it has been argued that Afro-neoliberalism (and its project of macro-restructuring) is not a developmental concept. Moreover, Afro-neoliberalism is about disciplining Africa and ensuring it fits into a new global capitalism as a supplier of raw materials.

Warren did not live to see the rise of transnational neoliberalism and how its universalisation has destroyed alternative development paths, including diverse forms of national capitalism. The contemporary world of global capitalism is about restructuring national, regional and the global political economy models in keeping with the strictures of transnational neoliberalism. It has been about fostering convergence around dis-embedding markets, the subordination of states to the imperatives of market competition, integration of financial markets and globalising
production structures underpinned by US supremacy. In the main transnational neoliberalism has been restructuring and re-organising the global political economy around the interests of transnational capital. This form and type of capitalism has had devastating consequences for the reproduction of societies and for nature. In the context of Africa the empirical evidence shows a new pattern of extraction and exploitation; a new scramble for Africa (Southall and Melber, 2009). A similar process of disembedding and destruction was observed by Karl Polanyi (2001) during the first part of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Polanyi cautioned against the irrationality of pursuing such a self-regulated market conception of capitalism. However, besides the physical destruction of market led development a neoliberalising Africa has to deal with specific historical limits. These limits also serve as a rebuttal to the Warrenite thesis.

(i) Global Rivalry, the Global Capitalist Crisis and Africa’s Politics of Poverty

Over the past few years Africa’s much vaunted economic revival has been presented to Africa’s publics as the basis for sustainable and long-term development. The media linked to the Afro-neoliberal historical bloc has trumpeted the virtues of Africa’s growth path and search for competitive advantage with tantalising headlines: ‘Africa’s political climate is hot, but so are its markets’, ‘Africa’s growth hits 30-year high’, ‘Big leap for African countries’, ‘Opportunities in Africa’, ‘Africa the new money frontier’, ‘Foreign investors eye Africa’ and so on.\(^1\) However, underlying this discourse is an African geopolitical space that has become embroiled in a new scramble for natural resources as mentioned above. More concretely this has been taking place in different sectors and in various countries.\(^2\) This has been facilitated by Africa’s continental passive revolution. National structural adjustment and AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring have created the conditions for this scramble. In this process of Afro-neoliberal accumulation various new social forces have been


\(^{2}\) This is a conclusion reached in a collection entitled: \textit{A New Scramble for Africa? Imperialism, Investment and Development} (2009) edited by Southall and Melber. The contributors to this collection look at various economic sectors: oil, minerals, genetic resources, fisheries.
penetrating Africa’s economies and markets in search of resources (Southall, 2009:1-35). Some of these social forces have intersected with AU-NEPAD to advance the interests of the US-led transnational historic bloc but some social forces have merely worked with the conditions it has created for transnational extraction of Africa’s resources. Thus the external social forces shaping Africa today are diverse and include: the former colonial powers particularly the UK and France, new industrialising powers like China, India and Brazil, as well as, the European Union.³  

In short, Africa’s increasing growth rates over the past few years merely affirm Africa as a site of global rivalry for raw materials and markets to meet the needs of a global capitalism; Africa’s new spike in growth has been a commodity boom.

While China has been viewed as a crucial actor in the new scramble for Africa, its role has been perceived and represented differently. Some have described China as a new imperialist force at the vanguard of the new scramble. Others have provided a more balanced view recognising that China’s expansion has to be located alongside the expansion by Western powers; it is one of many actors scrambling for Africa’s resources (Melber, 2009). However, the ‘China factor’ needs to be problematised given the temptation that some analysts have of suggesting China is a ‘mixed blessing for Africa’ such that it provides a counter to Western imperialism. When one looks closely at Chinese investment patterns and practices on the continent it is easy to reach such a conclusion. Chinese aid and investment is not tied to conditionalities like Western aid and in this sense is easily seen as ‘respecting national sovereignty’.

However, there are two crucial limitations. First, the Chinese economy is structurally tied in with the US through trade, through its dollar surplus, China’s investment in US government bonds and US investment inside China. China’s symbiotic relationship with the US makes it less of an emerging super-power rival to the US but rather a key economic pillar buttressing neoliberal global capitalism. Already in the midst of the global crisis it is displaying signs of caution vis-à-vis investments in Africa.⁴ Second, China is not at the vanguard of an alternative project for the global South. In fact it is

³ See Lee (2009) for an excellent overview of how the Cotonou Agreement is being used by the European Union to repartition Africa. Also see Naidoo (2009), Obi (2009), Massey and May (2009), Prichard (2009), Hönke (2009), Thompson (2009) and Standing (2009).

extremely self seeking in all its relationships, including with the African continent. This also means that while China is not inclined to remake Africa in its own image, it has employed various means to secure its interests including arms sales to illiberal regimes like Zimbabwe and Sudan. Such relationships have also contributed to violence against African citizens, conflicts and destabilisation. Utilising global rivalry, in the context of a new scramble for Africa’s markets and resources, has crucial limits.

The media voices, within the Afro-neoliberal historic bloc, have also tended to exaggerate the strength of Africa’s economies over the past few years based on a superficial interpretation of Africa’s growth figures. Some in the media have even argued that with the global economic slow down, Afro-neoliberal capitalism could navigate it. Some argued that Afro-neoliberal capitalism had its ‘macro-economic’ fundamentals right and therefore could weather the looming economic crisis. However, by 2009 while some commentators were still arguing that Africa was not fully integrated into the global economy, particularly financial markets, and therefore could escape the contagion of global recession, this proved to be incorrect by the middle of the 2009. National structural adjustment reforms and AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has not been able to cushion Africa from the global recession. Instead and according to the World Bank, Africa was likely to be the worst hit continent in the world due to the ‘financial crisis’. The IMF has revised its growth forecasts for Africa. For the region as a whole, growth is projected to decline from 5.25% in 2008 to 2% in 2009 (IMF, 2009: 93).

In the context of the global crisis, surrendering Africa’s development choices to the dictates of transnational capital have proven to be disastrous. Africa’s neoliberalisation since the 1980s has engendered a crisis prone Afro-neoliberal capitalism. With the increased growth rates over the past few years (averaging about

---

5 There is a growing literature looking at how China invests in Africa and how it invests in a capitalist way. See for example, C.K. Lee, 2008, K. Ampiah and S. Naidu 2008.
6% between 2006-2007) due to Africa’s commodity boom, Africa was not shielded from high food and fuel prices in 2008. All the macro-economic reforms and ‘good governance’ agendas imposed, including AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring, could not shield Africa from high food and fuel prices placing Africa in an extremely precarious position even before the world wide-recession. With the recession Africa is facing a sharp fall in demand for its commodities (including falling commodity prices), private capital flows, remittances and foreign aid. Currency depreciations are also making food dependent economies even more vulnerable as the costs for food imports have risen. This entire crisis has revealed the limits of developing Africa through luring in external financial flows. It challenges the entire paradigm of Afro-neoliberalism and the global consensus locking Africa into the global political economy on the terms of transnational capital. In the main it reveals an African economy rooted in enclave-based accumulation centred around natural resources. Africa’s Afro-neoliberal growth and boom economies have not become structurally diversified and are still locked into old patterns of exporting primary commodities. This limit of an Afro-neoliberal path of development also challenges the Warrenite thesis.

Moreover, one of the main aspects of Africa’s crisis in the midst of the global recession is its inability to sustain the basis for the Afro-neoliberal passive revolution. Central to this is the politics of poverty on the African continent. The politics of poverty as expressed through the MDGs have come up against serious limits. The MDGs represent the trickle down side of Afro-neoliberal capitalism; the reforms that are meant to mollify subaltern forces. This was highlighted in Chapter 2. For most African countries, it would seem that the MDGs have come to represent the meaning of development. Moreover, for many commentators Africa’s success and failure has...
increasingly come to be associated with the successful implementation of the MDGs. Africa today is the main laboratory for realising these goals within global development discourse. In 2008 the UN hosted a high level event to assess progress on achieving the MDGs and the role of ‘golden partnership’ in supporting poor countries. This high level event, organised at United Nations Headquarters on 25 September 2008, was a direct response to a 2005 consensus within the UN system that the MDGs would not be realised for the world’s poorest nations, particularly in Africa. Despite the commitments solicited from the UN for donor support to achieve the MDGs for the world’s poorest countries, particularly in Africa, the global crisis has unhinged all of this. According to the World Bank and IMF global monitoring report (2009: 2) entitled: *A Development Emergency* there is an acknowledgement that, ‘in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, which have high poverty rates, the growth slowdown essentially eliminates the pre-crisis prospect of continued reductions in the poverty count in 2009. Indeed, the poverty count is likely to rise in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2009, with the more fragile and low growth economies especially at risk’. Further the report states, ‘The overall outlook for the MDGs, already a cause for serious concern, has become still more worrisome. Strong economic growth in developing countries in the past decade had put the MDG for poverty reduction within reach at the global level, but the triple punch of the food, fuel, and financial crises creates new risks’ (2009: 3).

The real tragedy in the midst of the unravelling of Africa’s passive revolution and its push back into deeper poverty, is the failure by the US-led transnational historical bloc to recognise that, more than the symptomatic aspects of the crisis, the structural roots are the key to solving the crisis. With this failure to recognise the deeper structural crisis and the failure of neoliberalised global capitalism, the problem solving prescriptions coming to the fore are not going to solve what is a civilisation crisis. Instead, managing an obsolete and dying global capitalism is merely a recipe for further denuding the capacity of most societies to reproduce themselves and will further destroy the ecological conditions that sustain life on the planet. This also speaks to Warren. Imperialism is not the pioneer of capitalism in the 21st century but rather the source of its self destruction.
(ii) US Supremacy and the Securitisation of Neoliberalism in Africa

While the Afro-neoliberal project of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has engendered a new scramble for Africa, this has expressed itself through a new form of rivalry: global rivalry on the African continent. The logic of competitiveness at the heart of Afro-neoliberalism creates the conditions for various transnational capitalist interests to jostle for African commodity markets. However, this does not take away from Africa increasingly becoming a site of US supremacy. In reality the neoliberalisation of Africa has also been affected by the ‘securitisation’ of global accumulation due to the US-led ‘war on terror’. This further reinforces the ‘illiberal’ side of Africa and brings in an unprecedented US military presence through a new Africa-command. It also brings US-state imposed ‘pre-emptive’ conditionalities on aid and for bi-lateral and regional trade for the poorest countries on the African continent. This is neoliberalisation through US supremacy and not through hegemonic intrusions. This means ‘Afro-neoliberal capitalism’, the new concept of control, together with US imposed securitised neoliberal accumulation are also going to set the rules and determine the conditions for the new scramble for Africa. This is likely to happen in contradictory ways.

Prior to 9/11 the George W. Bush Administration publicly acknowledged a growing energy crisis in the US. However, instead of choosing a renewable energy path to solve this crisis, Bush rejected this in favour of a continued oil import dependency (Klare, 2003). His National Energy Policy projected that by 2020 the US will have to increase imports from 11 million barrels per day (mbd) to 18.5 mbd, an increment of 7.5 mbd or the equivalent of the total current oil consumption of India and China (Klare, 2003: 169). Both in terms of present and future oil consumption, the US is still the largest oil consumer on the planet. Consequently, its energy policy choice, under the Bush regime, has also meant that US security is directly tied into ensuring steady, uninterrupted oil imports (Klare, 2003). It means foreign deliveries of oil to the US cannot be impeded by war, revolution, or civil disorder and that these energy-supply imperatives will extend to all major supply regions including Africa.

However, after 9/11, the security imperatives of the USA have gained primacy in its foreign policy as it wages the ‘war on terror’. This is reflected in the evolution of the
post-Washington consensus into a ‘with us’ or ‘against us’ emphasis, through numerous Presidential pronouncements, and a decisive policy shift in the *National Security Strategy of the USA* (NSS) (2006). This strategy affirms that: ‘Africa holds growing geo-strategic importance and is a high priority of this Administration’ (2006: 42). The broad objectives underpinning Africa’s importance are clearly articulated: ‘The United States recognises that our security depends upon partnering with Africans to strengthen fragile and failing states and bring ungoverned areas under the control of effective democracies […] Through improved governance, reduced corruption, and market reforms, African nations can lift themselves toward a better future’ (2006: 42). These intentions have to be read together with the rest of the *Security Strategy*, which explicitly links development support measures – trade and aid - to the USA’s security concerns.

The ‘securitisation’ of the post-Washington consensus has two crucial aspects. First, it tightens and foregrounds the intersection between energy, security and foreign policy in the USA. Second, following Soederberg (2006) and based on the objectives of the NSA document, it is clear that the ‘post-Washington consensus’ intends to confront the threats facing neoliberal globalisation through greater control and surveillance. It is about ‘pre-empting’, through unilateralism rather than multilateralism, the development challenges facing ‘failed’ and ‘weak’ states. In this way the security of the USA is managed by bringing in excluded states into global capitalism, particularly on the African continent, in a disciplined way and on the neoliberal terms of the USA.

Under Barack Obama’s presidency this foreign policy approach has not been jettisoned. While his stimulus package does place an emphasis on renewable energy and the need for investment in clean energy sources like solar and wind, he still has not elaborated a clear energy policy for the US. Moreover, while Obama has made important changes in style, has signalled an interest in constructive dialogue with the Muslim world and has also made an important Executive Decision to close up the infamous Guantanamo prison, his administration is still firmly wrapped up in the war on terror. Obama’s administration has also not rolled back key pieces of legislation that restrict freedoms within the US, as part of the fight against terrorism.
While still early to tell how Obama’s administration will deal with Africa, it would seem the continuities with George Bush’s Africa policy seem to loom large. This brings us to an unprecedented and very purposeful executive decision that was taken in 2007 by the USA government regarding the establishment of an integrated Africa military command structure (Rupiya and Southall, 2009). Concrete steps are being taken to establish such an Africa Command structure in the next few years. Inserted into the African context these ‘securitised post-Washington consensus’ policy positions represent a new dimension and more fundamentally a ‘conjunctural’ shift in which the relations of force are seriously changed. This prompts a fundamental question: What are the possible implications of a ‘securitised neoliberal post-Washington consensus’ for Africa?

First, it means Africa’s petro-states have a geo-political significance that far outweighs the rest of Africa. Currently, it is estimated that Africa produces 12% of the world’s liquid hydrocarbon, about one in four barrels of oil outside of North America (Vines, 2006:64). Most forecasts suggest that Africa’s contribution to global oil production is likely to increase tremendously by the end of the decade due to growing global demand, its low-sulphur content during refining and the ease of exporting from the Gulf of Guinea. For the USA this is important in terms of transportation across the Atlantic to its eastern seaboard. At a geo-political and policy level for the USA, increasing oil imports from Africa breaks its dependence on Persian Gulf oil supplies. This consideration has been important for the influential US Council on Foreign Relations (Victor, 2006). Currently, Africa supplies the USA with nearly 20% of its petroleum needs, and given the energy choices made by the Bush government, supplies from Africa are going to balloon. As the USA reduces its import dependence on Persian Gulf states, securing the supply of Africa’s oil is an absolute necessity. Currently, in Sub-Saharan Africa the USA is targeting the largest oil producers – notably Nigeria and Angola which together account for close to 50% of output - with $40 billion invested by US oil transnationals in West Africa over the last decade and with a further $50 billion injection expected before the end of the decade (Watts 2006; Lyman and Morrison 2006). This means the military presence on the continent will be utilised to secure these oil interests and ensure an uninterrupted supply.
Second, a securitised neoliberal post-Washington consensus implies that any prospect of utilising Africa’s oil wealth for continental development is contained. An oil nationalism linked to Pan-Africanism is an unlikely prospect. Many of the petro-states have been disciplined by the first Gulf War and the subsequent invasion of Iraq, which has confirmed the willingness of the USA to utilise its awesome military strength to secure what it wants. Moreover, the globalisation of domestic human rights abuses from the US, including the curtailing of civil liberties and political rights, has been encouraged through the infamous Patriot Act (2001). The US’s emphasis on combating global and ‘domestic terrorism’ in this way is bound to strengthen the authoritarian impulses of Africa’s petro-states and authoritarian regimes more generally.\(^{10}\) The alliances formed between the US and many of these regimes, both for oil and the ‘war on terror’, will likely translate into a ‘conducive business climate’ at all costs. This poses a direct challenge to the vision of a liberal Africa at the heart of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring.

Third, both the USA’s approach to protecting its oil interests in the Persian Gulf and its counter-attacks waged under the pretext of the ‘war on terror’, suggest an invasive disposition which will likely translate into a visible presence and meddling in internal politics. Currently, the USA has already started militarising its relations with numerous African petro-states. According to Klare (2003: 177), Washington has made numerous African petro-states eligible for military aid and is planning a potential base location, at the heart of the West African oil spigot, probably on the island of Sao Tome e Principe. This approach will likely breed hostility and invite Islamic extremists to escalate armed conflict. Given the fragile nature of the states the USA is targeting on the continent, there is potential for ‘many Iraqs’. Reminiscent of the Cold War era, Africa is likely to be further destabilised by super-power-incited armed conflict and again AU-NEPAD restructuring is threatened and limited from the outside.

\(^{10}\) US Patriot Act of 2001 was enacted to ‘deter and punish terrorist acts in the United States and around the world, to enhance law enforcement investigatory tools, and for other purposes’. It has ten Titles which deal with the following issues: (I) Enhancing Domestic Security Against Terrorism; (II) Enhanced Surveillance Procedures; (III) International Money Laundering Abatement and Anti-Terrorist Financing Act of 2001; (IV) Protecting the Border; (V) Removing Obstacles to Investigating Terrorism; (VI) Providing for Victims of Terrorism, Public Safety Officers and their Families; (VII) Increased Information Sharing For Critical Infrastructure Protection (VIII) Strengthening the Criminal Laws Against Terrorism; (IX) Improved Intelligence and (X) Miscellaneous
Finally, the ‘securitised post-Washington consensus’ will utilise aid and trade on the African continent to ensure ‘pre-emptive’ action against threats to neoliberalism. For example, the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) and Corporation were established by George W. Bush as a US response to the financing challenges of the UN Millennium Development Goals for the poorest countries in the world. Through the MCA, countries have to conform to sixteen criteria to obtain assistance. According to Soederberg (2006), the criteria not only affirms the ‘golden straightjacket’ of neoliberalism but also the funding mechanism fits in with a unilateral practice. Soederberg further highlights the distinction between loan finance and the MCA provisioning of performance-based grants. These grants are an alternative to loan based practices, which give recipients greater latitude on how finances are spent. Performance based grant financing provides for greater control, surveillance and influence directly by the US President and state through the MCA. By 2005 eight African countries – Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique and Senegal – had cleared the first round of qualifying hurdles. According to Moss, ‘for the qualifying countries, the potential gains in aid are huge, perhaps tripling the amount of assistance from the United States, already amongst the largest donors to each of these countries’ (2007: 140).

For the Afro-neoliberal project this re-enforces its Afro-neoliberal vision of a liberal Africa and a continental passive revolution supporting an externalised development path. However, in the context of securitisation, the coercive logic of performance based grant funding will also extend to trade relations like the American Growth and Opportunities Act and bi-lateral relations. This means the ‘failed African state’ is going to have to accept all the pathologies imputed to it at a common sense and policy discourse level, implying surrender to the paternalism of a ‘securitised post-Washington consensus’. This is nothing short of a supremacist project, similar to but different from the first scramble for Africa. Put differently, US supremacy even under an Obama administration is coercive. The militarism of the ‘securitised post-Washington consensus’ and the ‘war on terror’ creates the conditions for further destruction of poor societies, including many in Africa. This means the new imperialism of US supremacy is not developmental; it is not the harbinger of prosperity and progress. This also challenges Warren’s thesis.
Thinking About Africa in a Gramscian Way

Thinking about Africa’s macro-restructuring in a Gramscian way has brought various new dynamics and actors into view. First, Africa’s new scramble is understood as based on new dynamics of accumulation that have been in the making for the past three decades and in a new global conjuncture. Africa’s natural resources, markets and states are not being captured through colonial domination. Instead Africa’s scramble is happening under new conditions and dynamics of accumulation in which a new global capitalism is emerging and in which a US-led transnational historical bloc is determining Africa’s place in the new world order through a mix of consent and coercion. Africa’s place in the new world order happens through the articulation between hegemony in the Northern-centric power structures and passive revolution on the continent. Africa’s national and continental passive revolutions are happening and being consolidated in the conjuncture of AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring. Such a conjuncture reflects and affirms relations of force in support of an Afro-neoliberal solution for Africa’s organic crisis.

Second, a Gramscian way of thinking about Africa has also brought into view the role of external and internal social forces in shaping the conditions for a new scramble for Africa. In this study the most important external social forces shaping Africa are the UN, the World Bank and IMF, the G7/8 and the World Economic Forum. These are forces supporting AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring and are also co-managing a global consensus with Africa’s Afro-neoliberal historical bloc about the direction of Africa’s accumulation path and its development choices. At the same time, a Gramscian lens has also prompted a new look at Africa’s class structure in the context of global capitalism. This has prompted a class analysis which brings out the structural presence and agency of a transnational fraction of Africa’s ruling class. Such a transnational fraction has a vision and commitment to a long term project for Africa. This commitment is shared by other social forces on the continent and these forces congeal into an Afro-neoliberal historical bloc leading Africa’s continental passive revolution. Such a passive revolution is about restoring the subordinate position of Africa in relation to the Northern-centric power structure, integrating Africa’s Afro-neoliberal historical bloc into the US-led transnational historical bloc, pacifying
Africa’s citizens through a politics and discourse of poverty reduction and ensuring the conditions are in place for extracting Africa’s wealth.

Finally, Gramsci did not live at a time when transnational capital had sway over the world. He did not encounter the ideology of transnational neoliberalism. However, through a Gramscian way of thinking about Africa we have had to take the ideas of transnational capital seriously. We have had to think about how transnational neoliberalism as a material force inhabits the African space. This study has shown that transnational neoliberalism, as an instrument of class rule, has been central in the making of Africa’s passive revolution and ensuring Africa adjusts to transnational capital at the national and continental levels. In its African articulation it has African characteristics and is operationalised through particular strategies on the African continent. Afro-neoliberalism as expressed through AU-NEPAD macro-restructuring has its own discourse, concepts and policies through which power relations are remade. The situated and specific class practices of Africa’s transnational fraction and its Afro-neoliberal historical bloc provide the material basis for this and are central in engendering new power relations on the African continent. A Gramscian way of thinking about Africa has assisted with achieving this understanding.